

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 /066 W

----- 067441

P R 301709Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3968

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: FDP HOLDS NATIONAL CONVENTION

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE 26TH FDP NATIONAL CONVENTION, HELD IN MAINZ OCTOBER 27-29, WAS THE QUIETEST LIBERAL BUNDESPARTEITAG IN RECENT MEMORY. PARTY CHAIRMAN GENSCHER'S OPENING SPEECH EMPHASIZED THE TRADITIONAL LIBERAL GOALS OF PRESERVING AND EXPANDING INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND LEFT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE FDP INTENDS TO REMAIN IN COALITION WITH THE SPD AFTER THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION. GENSCHER PROMISED THAT HE WOULD ANNOUNCE THE FDP INTENTIONS AT THE LIBERALS, BUNDESPARTEITAG NEXT MAY IN FREIBURG. MINISTER FRIDERICH'S SPEECH STRESSED THE LIBERAL PARTY'S VIEWS ON ECONOMICS (I.E., FULL SUPPORT FOR FREE ENTERPRISE). FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL BANGEMANN GAVE A "EUROPA-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITIK" SPEECH IN ANTICIPATION OF THE DIRECT ELECTION

TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SCHEDULED FOR 1978. THE MOOD AT THE CONVENTION WAS RELAXED AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT GENSCHER WAS BASKING IN THE GLORY OF LIBERAL VICTORIES IN RECENT LANDER ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE 26TH FDP NATIONAL CONVENTION, HELD IN MAINZ OCTOBER 27-29, WAS LESS CONTROVERSIAL THAN ANY LIBERAL BUNDESPARTEITAG IN RECENT YEARS. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE CONVENTION WAS WELL PREPARED (SOME WOULD SAY OVER-COOKED) IN ORDER TO INSURE AN IMAGE OF SOLIDARITY IN THE PRE-BUNDESTAG ELECTION PERIOD. TRADITIONAL POINTS OF CONTROVERSY AT LIBERAL GATHERINGS, SUCH AS CAPITAL FORMATION, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND EDUCATION REFORM WERE HARDLY DISCUSSED. EVEN THE PROPOSAL INTRODUCED BY SOME OF THE LEFT-WINGERS TO DISCUSS GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INVESTMENTS ("INVESTITIONSLENKUNG") WAS TURNED OVER TO A COMMITTEE HEADED BY FRIDERICH'S WHICH WILL REPORT AT THE "PARTEITAG" NEXT MAY.

2. GENSCHER'S OPENING SPEECH WAS WELL RECEIVED. HE STRESSED LIBERAL PRINCIPLES AND CALLED FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO REACH A COMPROMISE WITH LIBERALS ON A CODETERMINATION BILL TO DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY OF THE COALITION TO WORK TOGETHER IN SOLVING PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH GENSCHER SAID THE PARTY WOULD NOT MAKE A FORMAL DECLARATION UNTIL MAY OF ITS FUTURE INTENTIONS CONCERNING A COALITION PARTNER AFTER THE 1976 ELECTIONS, HE LEFT A CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE LIBERALS WILL REMAIN IN COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

3. DEPUTY PARTY CHAIRMAN AND ECONOMICS MINISTER FRIDERICH'S GAVE A ONE-HOUR SPEECH OUTLINING LIBERAL ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES. HE REJECTED DIRECT GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT AND CONTROLS IN FAVOR OF INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT, POINTING OUT THAT EGALITARIANISM

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SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 /066 W

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P R 301709Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, AND SUPPORTED THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE. SOME OF THE DELEGATES, PARTICULARLY THE YOUNG DEMOCRATS, TOOK ISSUE WITH FRIDERICH'S AND HIS SUPPORTERS LAMBSDORFF AND RIEMER, BUT THE TONE OF THE DEBATE WAS NOT ACRIMONIOUS. THE QUESTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE ECONOMY WAS SHELVED, BY SUBMITTING ALL MOTIONS CONCERNING THE SUBJECT TO A COMMITTEE HEADED BY FRIDERICH'S WHICH WILL PREPARE A REPORT FOR NEXT MAY'S "PARTEITAG."

4. A NUMBER OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE LACK OF CONTROVERSY IN MAINZ. THE EARLIER RESIGNATION BY BANGEMANN FORECLOSED DISCUSSION ABOUT FUTURE COALITION OPTIONS. THERE WAS NO ELECTION FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (MEMBERS SERVE TWO YEARS AND THERE WILL NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE ANOTHER ELECTION UNTIL AFTER NEXT YEAR'S BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS) AND THEREFORE NO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS OF THE PARTY. EVEN THE POTENTIAL DIVISIVE QUESTION OF "REFORM OF CAPITALISM" WAS PLAYED DOWN BY THE LEADERSHIP AND THE DELEGATES WENT ALONG IN ORDER TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF SOLIDARITY FOR NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION.

5. PARTY CHAIRMAN GENSCHER WAS IN A JOVIAL MOOD THROUGHOUT THE CONVENTION. RECENT SUCCESSES IN THE LAENDER ELECTIONS IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA, SCHLESWIG-

HOLSTEIN AND BREMEN HAVE NOT ONLY MADE THE LIBERALS
LESS NERVOUS IN GENERAL BUT ALSO REFLECT TO THE CREDIT
ON THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN. HOWEVER, UNDERNEATH THE
VENEER OF WELL-BEING, THE OLD STRAINS AND PRESSURE
POINTS REMAIN. FOR EXAMPLE, RECENT STUDY DONE BY THE
ALLENSBACH INSTITUTE INDICATES THAT THE LIBERAL VOTE
REMAINS UNSTABLE AND THAT GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AMONG
LIBERALS ARE GREATER THAN IN THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES.
THIS POLL WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THE LIBERALS,
DESPITE RECENT SUCCESSES, HAVE NOT BUILT A SOLID CORE
OF LOYAL VOTERS, BUT CONTINUE TO LIVE OFF THE DISSATIS-
FACTION OF THE INDEPENDENT VOTES WITH THE
OTHER TWO PARTIES.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BONN17758
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750377-0198
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975107/aaaaafrg.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FDP HOLDS NATIONAL CONVENTION BEGIN SUMMARY: THE 26TH FDP NATIONAL CONVENTION
TAGS: PINT, GE, FDP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006